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RHMFISS/CDR USSOCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEILB/NCTC WASHINGTON DC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
RHMFISS/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHDC
RHMFIUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 001427

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [XW](#)

SUBJECT: 6TH CONFERENCE OF THE EAST AFRICA REGIONAL
STRATEGIC INITIATIVE, JUNE 2, 2009

REF: STATE 049045

Classified By: POLOFF Samuel A. Madsen, reasons 1.4 b,d

11. (S/REL UK) Summary: Ambassadors from missions of the East Africa Regional Strategic Initiative (EARSII), along with interagency U.S. and UK government representatives, reviewed the status of counterterrorism (CT) efforts in the East Africa region and recommended specific measures to improve these efforts. Most of the discussion focused on Somalia. The participants recommended that the U.S. Government (USG) draft a more fully developed Somalia policy, improve and coordinate public diplomacy efforts, increase efforts to cut off funding and other support for al-Shabaab militants in Somalia, and increase support to the Somali Transitional Federal Government (TFG). They also recommended that the U.S. and UK governments work to improve their cooperative CT efforts in the region and that the USG work more closely to support the CT efforts of regional bodies, particularly the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). End Summary.

12. (U) The U.S. Ambassadors to Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia and Yemen, the Charges d'Affaires at the embassies in Mauritius and Tanzania, representatives from the U.S. Embassies in Uganda, Sudan and the Nairobi based Somalia Unit, senior State Department and interagency officials met on June 2nd in Nairobi, Kenya to discuss measures to defeat terrorism in East Africa. USG agencies represented included State (S/CT, AF, DS/ATA and INR/TNC), DoD (AFRICOM, SOCAFRICA, and CJTF-HOA), USAID, DHS, NCTC and DoJ. Specially invited representatives from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defense also participated.

Somalia

13. (S/REL UK) The conference presenters and participants discussed three principal subject areas, primarily focusing on Somalia. State Acting AF DAS Karl Wycoff said the U.S. has a developing Somalia policy and it has two immediate priorities : 1) Support the TFG and 2) Counter al-Shabaab and other terrorist

elements in Somalia. The conference participants expressed a desire to see a clarification of U.S. policy toward Somalia. (NOTE: copies of both the most recent Somalia Policy document and of the most recent version of the East Africa Counter Terrorism Strategy will be sent to posts for their information and comment. End Note.)

¶4. (S/REL UK) Participants agreed on the need for more attention to Somalia and expressed concern that there is no "Plan B" for the current U.S. policy. If the TFG falls there is no viable back-up plan for stabilizing Somalia, which worries other governments in the region. On a positive note, Ambassador Ranneberger noted that since at least 1991 no government in Somalia has had as much legitimacy as the current TFG.

¶5. (S/REL UK) Ambassadors considered the question of how open and vocal USG support for the TFG should be and recommended that our support be more visible. They also agreed that USG public diplomacy and strategic communications efforts must be improved. Ambassador Ranneberger noted that the Embassy Nairobi Media Information Support Team (MIST) is providing support to the TFG, but stated that more should be done in our public outreach efforts overall. Ambassadors again underscored that robust press guidance (Stratcom) must be available for the missions to use immediately following any USG kinetic action in Somalia - a point they had strongly endorsed during the last RSI conference. Such public diplomacy will prevent violent extremists from defining any such incident in ways that foster radicalization and

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undermine popular perceptions of the United States in the region.

Ambassadors discussed whether the U.S. should broaden kinetic strikes beyond al-Qa,ida linked High Value Targets to include foreign fighters and training camps inside Somalia when necessary and feasible, noting that the TFG supports such actions. S/CT and AF/DAS noted that decisions on kinetic strikes will be made by D committee meetings of principals.

¶6. (S/REL UK) RSI participants acknowledged that cutting off financial and other support to Al Shabaab is crucial. The group reportedly receives funds from supporters in the UK, Canada and other countries. Eritrea, which continues to be a major financial supporter despite its own severe economic situation, receives financial support from Qatar, Libya and Sudan. The participants agreed that diplomatic efforts to eliminate these sources of funding should be pursued.

¶7. (S/REL UK) The conference noted that regional states have stepped up efforts to support the TFG. For example, Kenya is offering to provide basic military training to TFG forces. However, while East African governments are deeply concerned about Somalia, they place even greater emphasis on security, rule of law, economic development and food insecurity in their bilateral relations with the U.S.

¶8. (S/REL UK) Ambassador Yamamoto asked whether the \$500,000 passed to the TFG was accurately accounted for and Embassy Nairobi and AF/DAS replied that an accounting had been obtained: arms were procured locally, salaries to TFG troops paid and provisions and supplies purchased, according to the documentation provided. But Ambassador Yamamoto questioned whether arms procurement was militarizing Somalia, a negative factor for a country with far too many weapons at the outset.

Rather than additional arms and munitions, providing increased humanitarian assistance, capacity building and putting structures in place were more critical. Further, new approaches such as supporting TFG-ASWJ rapprochement could be helpful. USAID Nairobi described a robust humanitarian program in place. Several of the participants commented that we could do better at publicizing our humanitarian and developmental efforts.

US/UK Cooperation

¶9. (S/REL UK) The UK representatives underscored that East Africa remains a CT priority for their government and indicated that East Africans are involved in terror plots in the U.K. They described their government's flagship prevention program to identify vulnerabilities for radicalization among populations. The program is conducted on a bilateral basis by UK diplomatic posts within the region. Key features of the program are as follows:

- Each post identifies likely drivers of extremism in their country;
- Public opinion polling establishes a baseline on trends towards radicalization;
- The mission develops a three year plan for projects to address identified grievances;
- Posts then assess the impact of those projects utilizing the polling baseline and follow-up polls.

¶10. (S/REL UK) The participants agreed that U.S. and UK cooperation was good in the region and recommended experts in their respective capitals and in the region should meet together to share lessons learned. The UK participants noted that they had developed points on how to talk with various segments of the Somali community in the UK. U.S. participants noted that the FBI was active with our Somali

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community, and we agreed to exchange information on this issue.

Increasing regional cooperation

¶11. (S/REL UK) Given that the AU and IGAD have recently issued statements condemning al-Shabaab and calling for sanctions against it, RSI Ambassadors believe more can and should be done to cooperate with these agencies to promote support for the Somali TFG as well as efforts to stabilize Somalia. According to the participants, host governments are considering more assistance for the TFG. They recommended that during the next IGAD Ministerial the USG seek concurrence from participating ministers (plus Yemen) to build regional cooperation against the threat of terrorism emanating from Somalia. The participants suggested that the USG propose joint efforts in several areas:

- Intelligence fusion
- Terrorist travel information sharing (including sharing of PISCES data)
- Interdicting cash and other flows (including foreign fighters) to al Shabaab (including information sharing on means of cash delivery)
- expanded outreach to Somali Diaspora communities in the U.S., Europe and within the region

¶12. (S/REL UK) The Ambassadors recommended that the USG conduct an interagency assessment of any technical areas of cooperation with the goal of establishing baseline capabilities, identifying current regional cooperation in these areas, and charting potential ways forward. Once the assessments are complete the USG should work to develop a regional implementation plan.

Additional issues

¶13. (S/REL UK) The Chiefs of Mission reiterated the urgent need for more effective Public Diplomacy and Strategic Communications efforts in order to get the U.S. government's

message across to the population of the region, repeating a point made at the last two RSI conferences.

¶14. (S/REL UK) The participants also noted the need for effective and frequent communications between the various U.S. missions in the region regarding the situation in Somalia and other CT issues. Since a lot of good information does not make it into the formal reporting channels, broader information sharing can improve everyone's ability to understand ongoing events.

¶15. (U) Participating RSI Chiefs of Mission have reviewed this cable prior to transmission, except for Embassies Dar es Salaam and Kampala, which did not have the opportunity to do so.

RANNEBERGER